Musician Wanted.

In a parish in Wales where very little English was spoken a general meeting was held to consider the desirability of putting a chandelier into the schoolroom. Every one seemed in favor of the idea.

"Do you think we ought to have one, Mr. Davis?" said the schoolmaster to a venerable parishoner.

"I agree to it," was the reply; "but there is one thing I wish to know. If we have a—a—"

"Chandelier," said the schoolmaster, helping him out.

"If we have a chandelier," the old man continued, "who is going to play it?"

Toasting the Teachers.

There was a meeting of the new teachers and the old. It was a sort of love feast, reception or whatever you call it. Anyhow, all the teachers got together and pretended they didn't have a care in the world. After the eats were et the symposiarch proposed a toast:

"Long Live Our Teachers!"

It was drank enthusiastically. One of the new teachers was called on to respond. He modestly accepted. His answer was:

"What on?"

A Change of Opinion.

"Talk is cheap," chuckled the politician with the telephone frank in his pocket.

After talking $20 worth, he pulled out his frank and found it had expired. "By heck!" he muttered ruefully, "that guy was right when he said that 'Silence is golden.'"—Judge.

A Bad Sign.

She—If I were you, dear, I would not send for that plumber again who came today. He's too inexperienced.

He—Didn't he do the work right?

She—Yes, he did the work all right, but he brought all the tools he needed with him.

He that is taught to live upon little owes more to his father's wisdom than he that has a great deal left him does to his father's care.—Penn.

It sometimes happens that a man who never even saw an airship flies just as high and falls just as hard.

We alway respect the opinions of a man who keeps them to himself.

The BRONZE BELL

BY LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

AUTHOR OF "THE BRASS BOWL," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS

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SYNOPSIS.

David Amber, starting for a duck-shooting visit with his friend, Quain, comes upon a young lady equestrian who has been dismounted by her horse becoming frightened at the sudden appearance in the road of a burly Hindu. He declares he is Behari Lal Chatterji. "The appointed emissaries of the Bell," addresses Amber as a man of high rank and pressing a mysterious little bronze box. "The Token," into his hand, disappears in the wood. The girl calls Amber by name. He in turn addresses her as Miss Sophie Farrell, daughter of Col. Farrell of the British diplomatic service in India and visiting the Quains. Several nights later the Quain home is burglarized and the bronze box stolen. Amber and Quain go hunting on an island and become lost and Amber is left marooned. He wanders about, finally reaches a cabin and recognizes as its occupant an old friend named Rutton, whom he last met in England, and who appears to be in hiding. When Miss Farrell is mentioned Rutton is strangely agitated. Chatterji appears and summons Rutton to a meeting of a mysterious body. Rutton seizes a revolver and dashes after Chatterji. He returns wildly excited, says he has killed the Hindu, takes poison, and when dying asks Amber to go to India on a mysterious errand. Amber decides to leave at once for India. On the way he sends a letter to Mr. Labertouche, a scientific friend in Calcutta, by a quicker route. Upon arriving he finds a note awaiting him. It directs Amber to meet his friend at a certain place. The latter tells him he knows his mission is to get Miss Farrell out of the country. Amber attempts to dispose of the Token to a money-lender, is mistaken for Rutton and barely escapes being mobbed. A message from Labertouche causes him to start for Darjeeling, and on the way he meets Miss Farrell.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Photograph.

That same night Amber dined at the Residency, on the invitation of Raikes, the local representative of government, seconded by the insistence of Colonel Farrell. It developed that Sophia's telegram had somehow been lost in transit, and Farrell's surprise and pleasure at sight of her were tempered only by his keen appreciation of Amber's adventitious services, slight though they had been. He was urged to stay the evening out, before proceeding to his designated quarters, and the reluctance with which he acceded to this arrangement which worker so happily with his desires, may be imagined.

Ease of anxiety was more than food and drink to Amber; his feeling of relief, to have convoyed Sophia to the company and protection of Anglo-Saxons like himself, was intense. Yet he swallowed his preliminary brandy-peg in a distinctly uncomfortable frame of mind, strangely troubled by the reflection that round that lone white table was gathered together the known white population of the state; a census of which accounted for just five souls.

Amber was relieved when at length the meal was over, and Miss Farrell having withdrawn in conformance with inviolable custom, the cloth was deftly whisked away and cigars, cigarettes, liquors, whisky and soda were served.

Amber took unto himself a cigar and utilized an observation of the Political's as a lever to swing the conversation to a plane more likely to inform him. Farrell had grumbled about the exactions of his position as particularly instanced by the necessity of his attending tedious and tiresome native ceremonies in connection with the tamasha.

"What's, precisely, the nature of this tamasha, Colonel Farrell?"

"Why, my dear young man, I thought you knew. Isn't it what you came to see?"

"No," Amber admitted cautiously; "I merely heard a rumor that there was something uncommon afoot. Is it really anything worth while?"

"Rather," Raikes interjected drily, "the present ruler's abdicating in favor of his son, a child of twelve. That puts the business in a class by itself."

"But why should a prince hand over the reins of government to a child of twelve? There must be some reason for it. Isn't it known?" asked Amber.

"Who can fathom a Hindu's mind?" grunted Farrell. "I daresay there's some scandalous native intrigue at the bottom of it. Eh, Raikes?"

The Resident shook his head. "Don't come to this shop for information about what goes on in Khandawar. I doubt if there's another Resident in India who knows as little of the underhand devilment in his state as I do. His majesty the Rana loves me as a cheetah loves his trainer. He's an intractable rascal."

"There have been a number of deaths from cholera in the Palace lately, the grand vizier's amongst them."

"White arsenic cholera?"

"That, and the hemp poison kind."

"Refractory vizier?" questioned Farrell. "The kind that wants to retrench and institute reforms—railways and metalled roads and so forth?"

"No; he was quite suited to his master. But the bazar says Narain! took a dislike to him for one reason or another."

"Narain!?" queried Amber.

"The genius of the place." Raikes nodded toward the Raj Mahal, shining like a pearl through the darkness on the hillside over against the Residency. "She's Salig's head queen. At least that's about as near to her status as one can get. She's not actually his queen, but some sort of a heritage from the Rutton dynasty—I hardly know what or why. Salig never married her, but she lives in the Palace, and for several years—ever since she first began to be talked about—she's ruled from behind the screen with a high hand and an outstretched arm. So the bazar says."

They arose and left the table to the servants, the Resident with Amber following Farrell and young Clarkson.

"Old women we are, forever talking scandal," said Raikes, with a chuckle. "Oh, well! it's shop with us, you know."

"Of course. . . . Then I understand that the tamasha is the reason for the encampment beyond the walls?"

"Yes; they've been coming in for a week. By tomorrow night, I daresay, every rajah, prince, thakur, baron, fief, and lord in Rajputna, each with his 'tail,' horse and foot, will be camped down before the walls of Kuttarpur. You've chosen an interesting time for your visit. It'll be a sight worth seeing, when they begin to make a show. My troubles begin with a state banquet tomorrow that I'd give much to miss; however, I'll have Farrell for company."

"I'm glad to be here," said Amber thoughtfully. Could it be possible that the proposed abdication of Salig Singh in favor of his son were merely a cloak to a conspiracy to restore to power the house of Rutton? Or had the tamasha been arranged in order to gather together all the rulers in Rajputana without exciting suspicion, that they might agree upon a concerted plan of mutiny against the Sirkar? The state affair of surpassing importance had been arranged for the last day of grace allotted the Prince of the house of Rutton. What had it to do with the Gateway of Swords, the Voice, the Mind, the Eye, the Body, the Bell?

"By the way, Mr. Raikes," said the Virginian suddenly, "what do they call the gate by which we entered the city—the southern gate?"

"The Gateway of Swords, I believe."

Farrell, on the point of entering the house, overheard and turned. "Is that so? Why, I thought that gateway was in Kathiapur."

"I've heard of a Gateway of Swords in Kathiapur," Raikes admitted. "Never been there, myself."

"Kathiapur?"

"A dead city, Mr. Amber, not far away—originally the capital of Khandawar. It's over there in the hills to the north, somewhere. Old Rao Rutton, founder of the old dynasty, got tired of the place and caused it to be depopulated, building Kuttarpur in its stead—I believe, to commemorate some victory or other. That sort of thing used to be quite the fashion in India, before we came." Raikes fell back, giving Amber precedence as they entered the Residency. "By the way, remind me, if you think of it, Colonel Farrell, to get after the telegraph clerk tomorrow. There's a new man in charge—a Bengali babu—and I presume he's about as worthless as the run of his kind."

Amber made a careful note of this information; he was curious about that babu.

In the drawing room Raikes and Farrell impressed Clarkson for three-handed bridge. Sophia did not care to play and Amber was ignorant of the game—a defect in his social education which he found no cause to regret, since it left him in undisputed attendance upon the girl.

She had seated herself at a warped and discouraged piano, for which Raikes had already apologized; it was, he said, a legacy from a former Resident. For years its yellow keys had not known a woman's touch such as that to which they now responded with thin, cracked voices; the girl's fine, slender fingers wrung from them a plaintive, pathetic parody of melody. Amber stood over her with his arms folded on the top of the instrument, comfortably unconscious that his pose was copied from any number of sentimental photogravures and "art photographs." His temper was sentimental enough, for that matter, the woman was very sweet and beautiful in his eyes as she sat with her white, round arms flashing over the keyboard, her head bowed and her face a little averted, the long lashes low upon her cheeks and tremulous with a fathomless emotion. It was his thought that his time was momentarily becoming shorter, and that just now, more than ever, she was very distant from his arms, something inaccessible, too rare and delicate and fine for the rude possession of him who sighed for his own unworthiness.

Abruptly she brought both hands down upon the keys, educing a jangled, startled crash from the tortured wires, and swinging round, glanced up at Amber with quaint mirth trembling behind the veil of moisture in her misty eyes.

"India!" she cried, with a broken laugh: "India epitomized: a homesick, exiled woman trying to drag a song of Home from the broken heart of a crippled piano! That is an Englishwoman's India: it's our life, ever to strive and struggle and contrive to piece together out of makeshift odds and ends the atmosphere of Home! . . . It's suffocating in here. Come." She rose with a quick shrug of impatience, and led the way back to the gardens.

Pensive, the girl trained her long skirts heedlessly over the dew-drenched grasses, Amber at her side, himself speechless with an intangible, ineluctable, unreasoning sense of expectancy. Never, he told himself, had a lover's hour been more auspiciously timed or staged; and this was his hour, altogether his! . . . If only he might find the words of wooing to which his lips were strange! He dared not delay; tomorrow it might be too late; in the womb of the morrow a world of chances stirred—contingencies that might in a breath set them a world apart.

They found seats in the shadow of a pepul.

"Are you in the habit of indulging in protracted silences?" she rallied him gently. "Between friends of old standing they're permissible, I believe, but—"

"A day's journey by tonga matures acquaintanceship wonderfully," he observed abstrusely.

"Indeed?" She laughed.

"At least, I hope so."

He felt that he must be making progress; thus far he had been no less inane than any average lover of the stage or fiction. And he wondered: was she laughing at him, softly, there in the shadows?

"You see," she said, amused at his relapse into reverie, "you're incurable and ungrateful. I'm trying my best to be attractive and interesting, and you won't pay me any attention whatever. There must be something on your mind. Is it this mysterious errand that brings you so unexpectedly to India—to Kuttarpur, Mr. Amber?"

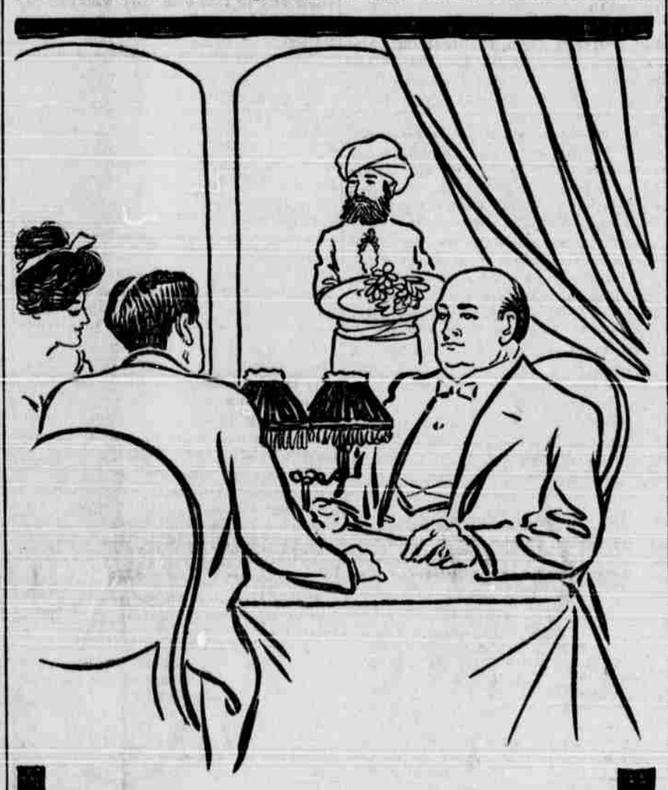
"Yes," he answered truthfully.

"And you won't tell me?"

"I think I must," he said, bending forward.

There sounded a stealthy rustling in the shrubbery. The girl drew away and rose with a startled exclamation. With a bound, a man in native dress sped from the shadows and paused before them, panting.

Amber jumped up, overturning his chair, and instinctively feeling for the pistol that was with his traveling things, upstairs in the Residency.



"Narain!?" Queried Amber.

The native, reassured him with a swift, obsequious gesture. "Pardon, sahib, and yours, sahiba, if I have alarmed you, but I am come on an errand of haste, seeking him who is known as the Sahib David Amber."

"I am he. What do you want with me?"

"It is only this, that I have been commissioned to bear to you, sahib."

The man fumbled hurriedly in the folds of his surtout, darting quick glances of apprehension round the garden. Amber looked him over as closely as he could in the dim light, but found him wholly a stranger—merely a low-caste Hindu, counterpart of a million others to be encountered daily in the highways and bazars of India. The Virginian's rising hope that he might prove to be Labertouche failed for want of encouragement; the intruder was of a stature the Englishman could by no means have counterfeited.

"From whom come you?" he demanded in the vernacular.

"Nay, a name that is unspoken harms none, sahib." The native produced a small, thin, flat package and thrust it into Amber's hands. "With permission, I go, sahib; it were unwise to linger—"

"There is no answer?"

"None, sahib." The man salaamed and strode away, seeming to melt soundlessly into the foliage.

For a minute Amber remained astare. The girl's voice alone roused him.

"I think you are a very interesting person, Mr. Amber," she said, resuming her chair.

"Well! . . . I begin to think this a most uncommonly interesting country." He laughed uncertainly, turning the package over and over. "Upon my word—! I haven't the least notion what this can be!"

"Why not bring it to the light, and find out?"

He assented meekly, having been perfectly candid in his assertion that he had no suspicion of what the packet might contain, and a moment later they stood beneath the window of Residency, from which a broad shaft of light streamed out like vaporized gold.

Amber held the packet to the light; it was oblong, thin, stiff, covered with common paper, guiltless of superscription, and sealed with mucilage. He tore the covering, withdrew the enclosure, and heard the girl gasp with surprise. For himself, he was transfixed with consternation. His look wavered in dismay between the girl and the photograph in his hand—her photograph, which had been stolen from him aboard the Poonah.

She extended her hand imperiously. "Give that to me, please, Mr. Amber," she insisted. He surrendered it without a word. "Mr. Amber!" she cried in a voice that quivered with wonder and resentment.

He faced her with a hang-dog air, feeling that now indeed had his case been made hopeless by this contretemps. "Confound Labertouche!" he cried in his ungrateful heart. "Confound his medding mystery-mongering and hokus-pokus!"

"Well?" inquired the girl sharply.

"Yes, Miss Farrell." He could invent nothing else to say.

"You—you are going to explain, I presume."

He shook his head in despair. "No . . ."

"What!"

"I've no explanation whatever to make—that'd be adequate, I mean."

He saw that she was shaken by impatience. "I think," said she evenly—"I think you will find it best to let me judge of that. This is my photograph. How do you come to have it? What right have you to it?"

"I . . . ah . . ." He stammered and paused, acutely conscious of the voices of the Englishmen, Farrell, Raikes, and young Clarkson, drifting out through the open window of the drawing room. "If you'll be kind enough to return to our chairs," he said, "I'll try to make a satisfactory explanation. I'd rather not be overheard."

The girl doubted, was strongly inclined to refuse him; then, perhaps moved to compassion by his abject attitude, she relented and agreed. "Very well," she said, and retaining the picture moved swiftly before him into the shadowed garden. He lagged after her, inventing a hundred impracticable yarns. She found her chair and sat down with a manner of hauteur moderated by expectancy. He took his place beside her.

"Who sent you this photograph of me?" she began to cross-examine him.

"A friend."

"His name?"

"I'm sorry I can't tell you just now."

"Oh! . . . Why did he send it?"

"Because . . ." In his desperation it occurred to him to tell the truth—as much of it, at least, as his word to Rutton would permit. "Because it's mine. My friend knew I had lost it."

"How could it have been yours? It was taken in London a year ago. I sent copies only to personal friends who, I know, would not give them away." She thought it over and added: "The Quains had no copy; it's quite impossible that one should have got to America."

"None the less," he maintained stubbornly, "it's mine, and I got it in America."

"I can hardly be expected to believe that."

"I'm sorry."

"You persist in saying that you got it in America?"

"I must."

"When?"

"After you left the Quains."

"How?" she propounded triumphantly.

"I can't tell you, except vaguely. If you'll be content with the substance of the story, lacking details, for the present—"

"For the present? You mean you'll tell me the whole truth—?"

"Sometime, yes. But now, I may not. . . . A dear friend of mine owned the photograph. He gave it to me at my request. I came to India, and on the steamer lost it; in spite of my offer of a reward, I was obliged to leave the boat without it, when we got to Calcutta. My friend here knew how highly I valued it—"

"Why?"

"Because I'd told him."

"I don't mean that. Why do you value it so highly?"

"Because of its original." He took heart of despair and plunged boldly.

She looked him over calmly. "Do you mean me to understand that you told this friend you had followed me to India because you were in love with me?"

"Precisely. . . . Thank you."

She laughed a little, mockingly. "Are you, Mr. Amber?"

"In love with you? . . . Yes."

"And how soon will you be free to tell me the whole truth?"

"Only after . . . we're married."

She laughed adorably. "Mr. Amber," she protested, "you are dangerous—you are delightful! Do you really believe I shall ever marry you?"

"I hope so. I came to India to ask you—to use every means in my power to make you marry me. You see, I love you."

"And . . . and when is this to happen, please—in the name of impudence?"

"As soon as I can persuade you—tonight, if you will."

"Oh!"

He was obliged to laugh with her at the absurdity of the suggestion. "Or to morrow morning, at the very latest," he amended seriously. "I don't think we dare wait longer."

"Why is that?"

"Delays are perilous. There might be another chap."

"How can you be sure there is'nt already?"

He fell sober enough at this. "But there isn't, is there, really?"

She delayed her reply provokingly. At length, "I don't see why I should say," she observed, " but I don't mind telling you—no, there isn't—yet." And as she spoke, Farrell called "Sophia?" from the window of the drawing room. She stood up, answering clearly with the assurance that she was coming, and began deliberately to move toward the house.

Amber followed, deeply anxious. "I've not offended you?"

"No," she told him gravely, "but you have both puzzled and mystified me. I shall have to sleep on this before I can make up my mind whether or not to be offended."

"And . . . will you marry me?"

"Oh, dear! How do I know?" she laughed.

"You won't give me a hint as to the complexion of my chances?"

She paused, turning. "The chances, Mr. Amber," she said without affectation or coquetry, "are all in your favor . . . if you can prove your case. I do like you very much, and you have been successful in rousing my interest in you to an astonishing degree. . . . But I shall have to think it over; you must allow me at least 12 hours' grace."

"You'll let me know tomorrow morning?"

"Yes."

"Early?"

"You've already been bidden to breakfast by Mr. Raikes."

"Meanwhile, may I have my photograph?"

"Mine, if you please! . . . I think not; if my decision is favorable, you shall have it back—after breakfast."

"Thank you," he said meekly. And as they were entering the Residency he hung back. "I'm going now," he said; "it's good night. Will you remember you've not refused me the privilege of hoping?"

"I've told you I like you, Mr. Amber." Impulsively she extended her hand. "Good night."

He bowed and put his lips to it; and she did not resist.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Synonyms.

The French Canadian always has trouble with the aspirate "th." At a debating club in the Province of Quebec members were required to draw a slip from a hat and debate upon the subject they received. A young countryman arose.

"I have drew the word 'bat.' I must told you dere is two, tree different kind of bat. Dere is de bat wot you play de baseball wit, de bat wot fly in de air at night and also de bat where you take de swim."—Success Magazine.

The Facetious Farmer.

"I am an actor out of work. Can you give me employment on your farm?"

"I can. But a day on a farm is no 20-minute sketch."

"I understand that."

"All right. Yonder is your room. When you hear a horn toot about 4 a. m. that's your cue."

Small Circulation.

Shopman—Here is a very nice thing in revolving bookcases, madam.

Mrs. Newrich—Oh, are those revolving bookcases? I thought they called them circulating libraries.—Christian Register.

A Cross-Reference.

Mistress—Have you a reference?

Bridget—Foine; Oi held the poker over her till I got it.—Harper's Bazar.

He that doth a base thing in zeal for his friends burns the golden thread that ties their hearts together.—Jeremy Taylor.

Another Phase of the Problem.

"Doubtless the servant girl problem is very annoying to you."

"Very," responded the housewife. "I have a really desperate time getting maids my clothes won't fit."

Not Much Income in Gotham

Philadelphian Might Do on $2,500 a Year, but It Wouldn't Keep New Yorker in Alimony.

He was a visitor from Philadelphia. Occasionally he takes a flyer over to the big city, being fond of the places where the electric lights are not doused at 11 p. m. He was confiding to a group of chance acquaintances over a Broadway bar the fact that a rich uncle had recently died and left him quite a considerable legacy. He was quite jubilant over his good fortune, but at the same time he explained that he couldn't touch the principal, that it was tied up in bonds or something and that he only got the interest on the money.

"Do you think," he said, "that a fellow on an independent income could live comfortably in New York and not worry very much about adding to it?"

"That would depend upon the amount of his income and the way he wanted to live," replied one of the group, an actor who had gained considerable notoriety by reason of his various matrimonial entanglements. "If it isn't an impertinent question, what is your income?"

The visitor from Philadelphia said it was about $2,500 a year.

"Well," drawled the actor, "$2,500 a year might be a whole lot of money over in your town, but, take my word for it, in New York it wouldn't keep you in alimony!"—New York Times.

Device to Disarm Submarines.

The French are experimenting with a new device for protecting warships against submarines when the former are stationary. It consists of groups of cylinders, about two inches in diameter, filled with high explosives and moored around the battleship, the cylinders being so connected with each other that when a submarine comes in contact with one or more of them it is entangled by the entire group, whose simultaneous detonation wrecks the submarine.

For Court Ladies Only.

One of the most exclusive clubs in London is the Queen Alexandra, which the queen herself often honors with her presence. Women may stay there overnight with all the comforts of home, and a card party or other kind of entertainment is almost always possible.

Army and Navy Inventors.

There are numerous examples of officers of the army and navy inventing machinery and devices which are used by the service without any compensation from the government. Generally speaking, they are guided by the code of honor that as they were educated at the expense of the government and enlisted in its service it has the right to the use of their inventions without payment of royalty or other money. There have been many who have not considered themselves so bound, and have claimed compensation for use of their inventions.—The Bookman.